

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 2206

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PN

SUBJ: ALLEGATION THAT AMBASSADOR FINCH TRIED TO SUBORN TACK

REF: A.) PANAMA 2167

B.) FBIS 2211604

1. ON APRIL 21 RADIO LIBERTAD (GOP PROPAGANDA VOICE) BROADCAST ALLEGATIONS MADE BY COLUMNIST JOAQUIN BELENO IN AFTERNOON DAILY EL PANAMA AMERICA FOR APRIL 19.

2. BELENO'S COLUMN QUOTES TACK AS INFORMING HIM ON THE AFTER-NOON OF OCT 11, 1972 OF A " SHOCKING ATTEMPT ON HIS PATRIOTISM PERPETRATED BY A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF NIXON WHO HAD COME ON A U. S . DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO THE INAUGURATION OF GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS H., EL INGENIERO DEMETRIO B. LAKAS Y EL LIC. ARTURO SUCRE C. ON THAT OCCASION THE COMMISSIONED OFFICIAL TRIED TO SUBORN OUR FOREIGN MINISTER .." BELENO GOES ON TO COMPARE THIS EFFORT TO THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO SUBORN TORRIJOS (REF A) AND TO SUGGEST THAT THE U. S. IS UNDERTAKING A CAMPAIGN TO BRIBE PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS.

3. COMMENT: JUST AS WAS TRUE WHEN THE GOVERNMENT PICKED UP THE PUEBLO (MADRID) TORRIJOS INTERVIEW AND PRINTED IT IN ITS PROPAGANDA ORGAN MATUTINO, THE GOVERNMENT PICKED UP THE ALLEGATIONS OF JOAQUIN BELENO AND GAVE THEM AN OFFICIAL CURRENCY
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BY BROADCASTING THEM ON RADIO LIBERTAD. AMBASSADOR FINCH HAD NO SEPARATE MEETING WITH TACK ALONE. HE PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS ALONG WITH THE OTHER REPRESENTATIVES ON OCTOBER 10 AND LATER THE SAME DAY HAD TWO MEETINGS, ONE WITH LAKAS AND ONE WITH TORRIJOS. TACK WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING WITH LAKAS. I WAS PRESENT ON ALL OCCASIONS WHEN AMBASSADOR FINCH SAW TACK AND NO STATEMENTS WERE MADE THAT COULD IN ANY WAY BE INTERPRETED AS AN ATTEMPT TO SUBORN TACK. THE TORRIJOS- TACK ALLEGATIONS REFLECT A MOOD OF DEFENSIVENESS IN THE WAKE OF NEW STORIES ON THE THREAT AGAINST SCALI AT THE SC MEETING, AND TORRIJOS' S CONSULTATIONS IN THE PROVINCES WHERE HE FOUND THE PEOPLE LESS IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED WITH THE CANAL TREATY ISSUE THAN HE HAD BELIEVED POSSIBLE DIRECTLY AFTER THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED SC MEETING.

4. THESE OFFICIALLY INSPIRED STORIES MAY BACKFIRE, OF COURSE, BECAUSE PANAMANIAN AND LATINS WILL BEGIN TO ASK WHERE TORRIJOS AND TACK ARE GETTING THEIR MONEY FOR THEIR NOTICEABLY IMPROVED STANDARD OF LIVING. PANAMANIAN MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE NEWS STORIES ARE A SMOKE SCREEN BUT MORE LIKELY THAT GRAFT OR THIRD COUNTRIES ARE INVOLVED.
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